



AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph found on page 1 (line 3) with the following new paragraph.

This application is a divisional continuation of U.S.S.N. 09/371,338 (now U.S. Patent No. 6,613,959 B1), filed August 10, 1999, which claims the benefit of the filing date of U.S.S.N. 60/095,938 filed on August 10, 1998 (now abandoned).

Replace the paragraph found on page 18 (line 15) with the following new paragraph.

Figure 11 is a diagram showing the alignment of the predicted amino acid sequences of the MAPKKKs: ANP1L (SEQ ID NO.:23), ANP1S (SEQ ID NO.:24), ANP2 (SEQ ID NO.:11), ANP3 (SEQ ID NO.:15), and NPK1 (SEQ ID NO.:19). Kinase domains of these proteins are double-underlined, and are about 268 amino acids in length. Residues that are conserved in three out of the four proteins except (ANP1S) are shown in white letters on a black background. Short conserved stretches (regions A-E) in the four proteins are underlined. Asterisks indicate the consensus sites of phosphorylation by Cdc2 kinase. Only the most carboxy-terminal five amino acid residues of ANP1S that differ from the amino-acid sequence of ANP1L are shown above it (Nishihama et al., *Plant J.* 12:39-48, 1997).